

## **Chapter 1**

### **Abstract**

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#### **CITATION**

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006 Summary File: Technical Documentation.

#### **TYPE OF FILE**

Summary statistics.

#### **SUBJECT CONTENT**

The American Community Survey (ACS) is the largest household survey in the United States, with an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses. Every year the ACS supports the release of single-year estimates for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more.

This release of the American Community Survey Summary File (ACS-SF) is a prototype using the 2006 detailed tables (a.k.a. “base tables”). The Census Bureau ACS programming staff plans to begin implementation of the production summary file series no later than December 2007. This prototype of the ACS-SF is meant to provide data users with an early version of the ACS-SF. We encourage data users to provide comments on this prototype to help us design and implement the full version of the ACS-SF. Please send any comments you have via email to: [nicholas.m.spanos@census.gov](mailto:nicholas.m.spanos@census.gov). Throughout 2007 we may issue updates and corrections to this prototype ACS-SF. We will keep users aware of these updates via the [ACS Alert](#) from the ACS website: <http://www2.census.gov/acs2006/summaryfile>.

The 2006 data products are the first to include the Group Quarters, or (GQ) population. The GQ population includes all people not living in households. ACS data were collected from residents who were currently residing in the GQs when the ACS was

conducted at that location. Data are collected at two types of group quarters: institutional, including residences such as correctional facilities, nursing homes, and psychiatric hospitals; and non-institutional, which include residences such as college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, and shelters.

The GQ population will be included in many of the tables for the “total population.” Every table that should be a “total population” table will include the GQ population. But, tables describing household characteristics will not include GQ data. For example tables such as Median Household Income, will only have data from the population living in households.

The ACS-SF contains the sample data, which is information about the characteristics of local communities compiled from the questions asked of a sample of people and housing units. The topics listed below are covered by the ACS and focus on demographic, social, housing, and economic characteristics and cover a broad spectrum of geographic areas in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Demographic:

<input type="radio"/> Sex	<input type="radio"/> Age
<input type="radio"/> Households by type	<input type="radio"/> Race
<input type="radio"/> Relationship	<input type="radio"/> Hispanic origin

Social:

<input type="radio"/> School enrollment	<input type="radio"/> Educational attainment
<input type="radio"/> Fertility	<input type="radio"/> Residence one year ago
<input type="radio"/> Veteran status	<input type="radio"/> Disability status
<input type="radio"/> U.S. citizenship status	<input type="radio"/> Language spoken at home
<input type="radio"/> Martial status	<input type="radio"/> Place of birth
<input type="radio"/> Year of entry	<input type="radio"/> Ancestry
<input type="radio"/> Grandparents caring for children	<input type="radio"/> World region of birth of foreign born

Economic:

<input type="radio"/> Employment status	<input type="radio"/> Commuting to work
<input type="radio"/> Class of worker	<input type="radio"/> Income and benefits
<input type="radio"/> Industry	<input type="radio"/> Occupation
<input type="radio"/> Poverty status	

## Housing:

<input type="radio"/> Housing occupancy	<input type="radio"/> Housing tenure
<input type="radio"/> Units in structure	<input type="radio"/> Year structure built
<input type="radio"/> Number of rooms	<input type="radio"/> Number of bedrooms
<input type="radio"/> House heating fuel	<input type="radio"/> Housing value
<input type="radio"/> Occupants per room	<input type="radio"/> Vehicles available
<input type="radio"/> Mortgage status and costs	<input type="radio"/> Utility cost
<input type="radio"/> Year householder moved into unit	<input type="radio"/> Gross rent

The statistics produced from the ACS describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States and Puerto Rico. The Census Bureau uses the data collected by the ACS to create estimates and variances, which are termed statistics, for these characteristics. The ACS releases statistics in several forms – totals, proportions, percentages, means, medians, averages, and ratios. There are three sets of data files in identical format with one field per estimate. One file contains the estimates, another file contains the standard errors, and the third file contains the margin of error.

The ACS-SF contains a total of 1261 unique detailed tables (a.k.a. “base tables”). Of these tables, ID’s beginning with the letter “C” are collapsed versions of tables (i.e. these tables have fewer detailed cells). These detailed tables include both U.S. and Puerto Rico population and housing characteristics for the housing unit population and for a limited list of race and Hispanic or Latino groups. Population and housing items may be cross-tabulated. Selected aggregates and medians are also provided. A complete listing of subjects in this file is found in the section, “[Subject Locator](#)”.

## **GEOGRAPHIC CONTENT**

The ACS Summary File includes all detailed tables for all geographies published by the 2006 ACS. The main directory of the ACS-Summary File’s FTP server (<http://www2.census.gov/acs2006/summaryfile>) contains documentation on using the ACS-SF and 54 subdirectories, for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The tables are identical for all files, but the geographic coverage differs.

This abstract lists the most frequently accessed geographic levels. The “Summary Level Sequence Chart” section outlines the hierarchical and inventory geographic summaries in their entirety. Two summary level sequence charts are provided: one for the state files and one for the final national file.

## **State Files**

ACS-SF for states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico provides data for these areas:

- State
- County
- County subdivision
- Place

ACS-SF for states also has inventory (complete) summaries for the following geographic areas:

- State
- County
- Place
- Congressional district (109<sup>th</sup> Congress)
- Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA)

## **National Files**

The ACS-SF national file provides summary data for the entire United States. The file structure includes, but is not limited to, the following geographic entities:

- United States
- Region
- Division
- State
- County
- County subdivision
- Place
- Metropolitan statistical area
- Combined statistical area
- New England City and Town Area (NECTA)
- Urban area
- Congressional district (109<sup>th</sup> Congress)
- Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA)